

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
USIA-06 ACDA-07 IO-13 OMB-01 DHA-02 TRSE-00 /078 W  
-----262248Z 001525 /15

R 260846Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3497  
INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO  
CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN PFOR KS US

SUBJ: KOREAN PRESS TREATMENT OF TROOP ISSUE AND OTHER ASPECTS OF  
ROK/US RELATIONS

SUMMARY: DESPITE ALMOST UNIVERSAL CONCERN OVER RECENT  
U.S. ACTIONS, PRINCIPALLY ANNOUNCEMENT OF TROOP WITHDRAWALS,  
RECENT KOREAN PRESS TREATMENT OF SENSITIVE STORIES SUCH AS  
THOSE ON TROOPS, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND ROK DEFENSE INDUSTRY, HAS  
GENERALLY HEWED TO PRO-GOVERNMENT UPBEAT LINE--ALTHOUGH UNDER-  
LYING OPPOSITION TO TROOP WITHDRAWAL SEEPS OUT FROM TIME TO TIME.  
OUTRIGHT ANTI-AMERICANISM REARS ITS HEAD ONLY VERY OCCASIONALLY.  
PRESS SOURCES INDICATE EDITORIAL COVERAGE IS RESULT OF CAUTION  
OR SELF-CENSORSHIP EXERCISED BY NEWSPAPER EDITORS INDIVIDUALLY,  
RATHER THAN AS RESULT OF DIRECT INSTRUCTIONS AS TO HOW THESE  
STORIES SHOULD BE PLAYED. END SUMMARY.

1. WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. GROUND FORCES, WHICH PRESIDENT CARTER  
ANNOUNCED MARCH 9 WOULD BE COMPLETED IN 4-5 YEARS, IS STILL  
SUBJECT OF ALMOST ALL CONVERSATIONS WE ARE HAVING, BUT VERNACU-  
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LAR PRESS COVERAGE HAS BEEN RELATIVELY SPARSE AND MUTED,  
RECENTLY. WHILE THERE HAVE BEEN PERHAPS AS MANY AS TEN EDITS  
THAT HAVE TOUCHED ON TROOP ISSUE IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER IN PAST  
FEW WEEKS, COMMENTATORS HAVE ACTUALLY GIVEN MORE ATTENTION TO  
OTHER US/KOREA PROBLEMS SUCH AS APRIL 14 U.S. RELAXATION OF  
BAN ON TRAVEL TO NORTH KOREA BY PERMANENT U.S. RESIDENTS,  
FISHERIES, AND TRADE ISSUES, AND PUBLIC RELEASE OF CLASSIFIED

STATE DEPARTMENT DOCUMENTS FOR 1949. ALL OF THESE ISSUES OF COURSE HAVE BEEN SOURCES OF CONCERN TO ROK PRESS, ALTHOUGH TONE OF EDITS HAS BEEN TEMPERED.

2. ON THE KEY ISSUE OF TROOPS, DESPITE KNOWN ROKG EFFORT TO ENCOURAGE OPTIMISTIC LINE ON WITHDRAWAL, THERE HAS BEEN LEAKAGE OF UNDERLYING ANIMOSITY TO U.S. TROOP PLANS AROUND EDGES OF EDITORIAL COLUMNS. WRITERS HAVE BEEN QUICK TO NOTE THAT NO OVERALL RATIONALE FOR WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. TROOPS HAS BEEN PROVIDED BY WASHINGTON AND THERE ARE CLEARLY EXPRESSED SUSPICIONS OF REAL U.S. MOTIVES AND INTENTIONS: JOONGANG ILBO, FOR EXAMPLE, HAS ACIDLY NOTED THAT PRESIDENT CARTER APPEARS TO GIVE PRIORITY TO HIS OWN PRINCIPLES RATHER THAN SERIOUS CONSIDERATION OF POSITION OF OTHER SIDE. CAREFUL READING OF EDITORIALS, PARTICULARLY ON OCCASION OF APRIL 10-12 VISIT OF CODEL WOLFF, REVEALS THAT WRITERS BELIEVE A MAJORITY OF KOREANS IS OPPOSED TO TROOP WITHDRAWAL AND THAT DOUBTS ON THIS ISSUE ARE WIDESPREAD. OTHER COMMENTARY HAS STRESSED "PRECONDITIONS" FOR WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. TROOPS, SUCH AS INCREASE IN AIR COVER, MAINTAINING COORDINATION WITH INCREASE OF ROK MILITARY STRENGTH, AND PREVENTION OF MISCALCULATION BY THE NORTH. SOME OF THESE "PRECONDITIONS" ARE TANTAMOUNT TO SAYING, "DON'T GO;" ONE COMMENTARY EVEN STATED, FLATLY, THAT CONTINUED U.S. TROOP PRESENCE WAS THE "BEST GUARANTEE" FOR DEFENSE OF KOREA. IN SHORT, WITHOUT SAYING SO DIRECTLY, EDITORIAL WRITERS SEEMS TO HAVE CAREFULLY BEEN TELLING PRESIDENT PARK OVER PAST WEEKS THAT THEY DO NOT AGREE WITH HIS SELF-CONFIDENT POSTURE ON TROOP ISSUE. INDEED, THEY MAY HAVE BEEN FACTOR MOTIVATING TOUGHER LINE AGAINST WITHDRAWAL THAT PRESIDENT PARK TOOK WITH AFP AND UPI OFFICIALS RECENTLY (SEPTEL). LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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3. HUMAN RIGHTS, AS MIGHT BE EXPECTED, HAS BEEN MENTIONED IN EDITORIALS ONLY IN NEGATIVE SENSE: FOR EXAMPLE, ONE EDIT STATES THAT IT WOULD BE WRONG TO CRITICIZE KOREA ON THIS ISSUE "EXCESSIVELY", ANOTHER THAT NO CONNECTION SHOULD BE DRAWN BETWEEN TROOP PRESENCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS. WHEN SOME OF RECENT CODEL'S MEMBERS EXPRESSED SURPRISE THAT EVEN ROK OPPOSITION ADVOCATED CONTINUED TROOP PRESENCE, NEWSPAPERS EXPRESSED SURPRISE AT THEIR IGNORANCE OF SITUATION IN KOREA AND ATTRIBUTED IT TO COVERAGE IN U.S. NEWSPAPERS.

4. SINCE DEPARTURE OF CODEL WOLFF, PAPER'S CONSIDERATION OF U.S.-KOREAN RELATIONS HAS MOVED ON TO OTHER THINGS. APART FROM ECONOMIC, TRAVEL, AND HISTORICAL DOCUMENT STORIES NOTED ABOVE, PRESIDENT PARK'S NEWS CONFERENCE APRIL 14, AFTER VISITING ROK DEFENSE INDUSTRIES, WAS PARTICULARLY SUCCESSFUL IN ELICITING UNIVERSAL EXPRESSIONS OF SATISFACTION AND PRIDE AT RAPID ROK PROGRESS IN MUNITIONS MANUFACTURE IN FIVE YEARS SINCE START IN 1972. THIS WAS SEEN AS ONE WAY TO COMPENSATE U.S. FORCE

DRAWDOWN. MOST ACCOUNTS NOTED PARK'S STATEMENT THAT THE SOUTH WOULD SURPASS THE NORTH IN 1980; SOME EMPHASIZED SUPERIORITY IN SOME AREAS EVEN NOW. NONE SEEMED TO REALIZE, AND CERTAINLY NONE STATED, THAT PARK EXAGGERATED ROK DEFENSE INDUSTRY CAPABILITY CONSIDERABLY.

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5. THERE HAVE BEEN A COUPLE OF INSTANCES OF OUTRIGHT ANTI-AMERICANISM IN THE PRESS. AT ONE POINT, EARLY IN THE TROOP WITHDRAWAL OUTCRY, THE GOVERNMENT UNLEASHED YUCHONGHUE ASSEMBLYWOMAN SUH YOUNG HEE ON U.S. IN PAGES OF KOREA HERALD, AND RECENTLY A KOREAN NOVELIST LET GO IN KIKCHE SINBO WITH A LONG LITANY OF U.S. ERRORS DATING BACK TO FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT, (P UTHEY OFTEN GO BACK TO

TEDDY\*). FOR THE MOST PART, THE PAPERS HAVE KEPT THIS STUFF OUT OF SIGHT, HOWEVER.

6. RECENT USIS CONTACTS WAWORS INDICATE THAT GOVERNMENT HAS GENERALLY CONTINUED ITS "HANDS-OFF" POLICY SINCE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR. ALTHOUGH IT GIVES INSTRUCTIONS ON INDIVIDUAL STORIES FROM TIME TO TIMES, ROKG HAS MOSTLY LEFT EDITORS TO MAKE OWN DECISIONS, ON BASIS OF PRIOR GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE. RESULT, IT SEEMS, IS THAT PRESS HAS GENERALLY FOLLOWED PRESIDENT'S WE CAN-GO-IT-ALONE LINE DESPITE THE

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AMERICAN ACTIONS. MORE THAN PRESIDENT PARK, HOWEVER,  
EDITORIALISTS HAVE LET THEIR RESENTMENT AND CONCERN  
SHOW.  
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## Message Attributes

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**TAGS:** SOPN, PFOR, MARR, KS, US  
**To:** STATE  
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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
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